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"SURELY I COME QUICKLY!"

A

LETTER TO EVERYBODY.

BY AN ENGLISH AUTHOR.

FROM THE FIFTH LONDON EDITION, 1835.

REVISED AND ABRIDGED

BY J. V. HIMES.

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LETTER TO EVERYBODY.

MY DEAR FRIENDS: I have a few things to tell you. They concern all of you. There is not a person living who has not the deepest interest in them. Whoever you are, rich or poor, young or old, learned or ignorant, you have more concern in these things than in anything you can think of besides. "*Surely I come quickly.*" Rev. xxii. 20. Jesus Christ speaks these words, and he speaks them to all. Jesus Christ, who tells you he is "the Son of God," one with the Father,* who took on him the seed of Abraham,† our nature,‡ and upheld it sinless: Jesus Christ, who died for sinners, for a world of sinners, and who now offers life and mercy to that world, says, "*SURELY I COME QUICKLY.*" Now what will Christ come again to this earth to do? He will come to reign with his saints, and to destroy his enemies.‡ But who are his enemies? He tells you himself. Those who

* John ix. 35—37; x. 30—36. † Heb. ii. 10—18; iv. 15.
‡ 2 Thess. i. 7—10; Rev. xix. 11, &c.; xx. 6.

"will not have him to reign over them." Luke xix. 27. You say you have not used this language. Perhaps not; but do not actions speak louder than words? Christ says, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." Now, if these are his *friends*, his *enemies* must be those who do *not* do what he commands them. Taking these words for your guide, are you ready to meet your Judge? Those that will be saved are described as those that LOVE HIS APPEARING: 2 Tim. iv. 8: those that look for him, and desire him to come. Do *you* wish Christ to come? Do you love him? If you do, you *will* wish him to come, and you will be often thinking about his coming; but the wicked, those who do not love Christ, *cannot* wish him to come, because he will come to destroy them, and then they must be in hell *forever*. Awful consideration!

My friends, do you know how near you may be to the "END OF ALL THINGS?" Do you know that these days in which you live, are called in the Bible the "*last days*?" All the signs of the times prove this. Wickedness abounds and increases on every side, and the Bible tells you it shall be so in the "*perilous times of the last days*." See the description of these perilous times, 2 Tim. iii.

The increase of scoffers, and the general unbelief of the near approach of Christ's second coming, is another sign of the times. Perhaps you are thinking, now, in your

hearts, that it is not likely that Christ should come while *you* live, and that you see no sign of his return. Do not you know then, that it is said in Scripture, (2 Pet. iii. 3, 4,) that "there shall come in the last days scoffers walking after their own lusts, and saying, where is the promise of his coming?" —just what you are thinking and saying. When the flood came in the days of Noah, (Gen. vi. vii.,) the men of that day would not believe God's warning, by the preaching of Noah. They saw no sign of a flood. They thought that it was not likely that it should come and drown them. It was a new thing; it had never happened before. They chose to take their own opinion instead of God's message and warning. They counted Noah a madman, and laughed at him, and scorned him, and thought they were the wise men, and he the fool. But what was the end? "The flood came and destroyed them all," while Noah and his family were safe in the ark. O, you who are thinking and acting like the men before the flood, *be warned in time*. What is the difference between you and them? There is *no* difference. They would not believe till the flood came, and therefore they perished. If *you* refuse to believe Christ's coming till you see him, you must perish, for then your doom will be sealed forever. See what use our Lord himself makes of this history of the flood. Matt. xxiv. 38, 39. He says, "As in the days that were

before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, *until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.*" You who think you have no concern with unfulfilled prophecy, with things foretold, but not yet come to pass, look at this example. The flood was prophesied of, was foretold. It was *before* the prophecy was fulfilled that mercy was offered. In the same way, Christ's second coming is foretold. It is *before* the prophecy is fulfilled that pardon is offered. "Until Christ comes, faith in his blood, shed at his first coming, will cleanse you from all your sins, but not after he comes again." THE DAY OF GRACE WILL BE SET IN JUDGMENT THEN.

.Are you angry because these things are plainly set before you, and pressed upon your notice—because you are told that they are things of the greatest consequence to you, though you choose to think they do not signify? Why do you think so? You are asleep—you are all asleep. Are you angry because your sleep is disturbed? If your house were on fire, should you be angry if your neighbor awoke you, and told you of it? O no! you say directly. If my neighbor saw my house on fire, he ought to awake me, and try to make me believe it. You can understand this. But, my dear friends, it is to snatch you, by God's grace, from worse

flames, from everlasting burnings, that I desire most affectionately, most earnestly, to warn you, and to shew you how near you may be to that awful time, "the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat." 2 Pet. iii. 12. Do not, like the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, mock at the Lord's message to you, as they did at righteous Lot. Be not angry with those whose best joy it would be that you should be saved from destruction. O, you care not for these things. You heed them not. You go on eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building, as they did of old, and foolishly think that you are getting rid of what is unwelcome news to you, if you can forget it, or resolve not to believe it. They of Sodom and Gomorrah did the same, but were they safe? What happened? "The same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all." And mark—this is the example Christ takes to shew us how it shall be at his coming. "Even thus," he says, as it was in the days of Lot, "even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed." Luke xvii. 28—30. Shall it be thus with *you* in that day? God forbid! "Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways. Why will ye die?"

There are many other signs of these our

times, which do indeed loudly and plainly declare, that the "coming of the Lord draweth nigh." Only two more will be mentioned here, because to explain them all would make this address too long, and because many books shewing these signs have been written. The cry has already widely gone forth, "Behold the bridegroom cometh." *O go ye out to meet him.* Take heed to these all-important truths, for they do most nearly concern all of you.

Listen to the next solemn warning. It is generally believed that the country and dominions of the Turks are represented by the river Euphrates, mentioned Rev. xvi.; for the countries where that river runs belong to the Turks. "The water thereof being dried up," when "the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates," (Rev. xvi. 12,) would signify, then, the wasting away of the Turkish power, and this has for some years been strikingly taking place.* The sixth vial of wrath, therefore, has probably long been pouring out upon the Turkish empire. Who can tell how soon the seventh and last vial shall be poured out upon the earth?—how soon the seventh and last trumpet shall begin to sound! Now after the sixth, and just before the pouring out of the seventh vial, Christ warns us of his com-

* Ottoman supremacy is now departed. We are therefore on the eve of the pouring out of the seventh vial.—Ed.

ing, in these remarkable words, "BEHOLD, I COME AS A THIEF," that is, suddenly, "unsuspected, like a thief, at a time, in a manner, and in a place where he is not expected."

The last sign which it is intended to notice here, is this: We are told that the Gospel shall be preached for a *witness* to all nations, and then shall the end be. Matt. xxiv. 14. Now in the last thirty years the Gospel has been sent into almost every part of the world. It was to be preached for a *witness*, because God had a people, a "little flock," to gather out of the nations. Then will "the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ." Rev. xi. 15. Then "shall the earth be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." Isaiah xi. 9. Then will be literally and completely fulfilled all the glorious promises concerning Christ's happy kingdom on earth, his millennial reign of blessedness. Then will Christ raise his dead saints to live and reign with him, and this is that glorious first resurrection so often mentioned in Scripture.*

My dear Christian friends,—for I speak now to those who love Jesus, to those to whom he is precious,—are these the things you think of with indifference? Are these the things you refuse to look into, to examine? Surely you cannot have considered

* Matt. xx. 4-6; 1 Cor. xv. 23, 51-54; Luke xx. 35, 36; Phil. iii. 11; 1 Thess. iv. 14-16.

their immense importance. They are not speculations, not the opinions of man. The mighty events that have been spoken of may be hanging over your heads. There is no time to lose. If we are not "watching and waiting for our Lord," looking for his coming with longing expectation, "loving his appearing," we have no right to conclude that we are the friends of Christ.

And now, what practical effect should these truths have upon each of us? How should our belief of them be shewn in our lives? Surely such a belief must raise us above the world; "for the fashion of this world passeth away." Shall we be "careful and troubled" about earthly things, when we know not how soon care and sorrow will be at an end forever? And, dear brethren, "seeing that ye look for such things," how diligent, how zealous should you be in the cause of Christ. "The time is short." Tell it to all around you. Tell sinners of their danger out of Christ. Warn the infidel, the unbelieving despiser of God's word, of his awful state. Ask him what his unbelief and scoffing have ever done for him; what such a course ever can do for him, but make him miserable here and hereafter? He has everything to lose if Christianity be true, while the Christian has everything to gain; but if the infidel could prove that he is right, he would gain nothing, while the Christian would lose nothing by his belief,

and would only be on the same footing with the infidel. But he cannot prove the Bible to be false. He knows in his heart he cannot. His conscience tells him it is true. His fears tell him it is true. Wicked men have always been found, who have tried to prove that the Bible was not true, but they have never been able to do it. Why do they wish to do this? Because they love sin, and God has declared that he will punish the unrepenting sinner with eternal fire. When they are deprived forever of space for repentance, what will they think of their mad folly then? Plead with these sinners against their own souls now while there is time. "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." Christians, keep not silence while your Lord is dishonored, and souls are perishing. Warn those who deny the divinity of the only Saviour, that they must perish everlastingly if they go on rejecting him, for *it is* fearfully and blasphemously to reject him. Warn your poor, mistaken and deceived Roman Catholic brethren, that their church, in which they trust, is the apostate Babylon, from which God's children must "come out, that they be not partakers of her sins, and receive not of her plagues." Rev. xviii. 4. Tell them with all affection, but with all firmness, that Christ is the only Rock, the only hope for their souls, and that they are ruining themselves forever by trusting to their priests, to their works, to the

prayers of saints, to the intercession of the Virgin, to anything in heaven or earth but Jesus Christ, and him ONLY. Tell them you love them, you love their never-dying souls, and you cannot bear to see them going to hell, and not tell them their danger. Christ says to all, "Search the Scriptures;" (John v. 39;) and if they let any one hinder them from doing this, they are despising God's commandment, trusting to a refuge of lies, and shutting themselves out from eternal life.

O! you, who do expect and long for the coming kingdom of your Lord, be instant in season and out of season. Tell others of its approach. Talk of its blessedness and joy. Say to the afflicted, to the poor, to the sorrowful, "Lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh." If you are Christ's, if he is all your hope, and all your desire; all you meet is mercy now, and will be glory soon. Nothing can happen to you now that your Father does not send; for while he "rules the world, you know that world is yours," because you are his, and he is choosing for you every moment just that which is best for you. Think of this when you are growing weary or impatient of pain or suffering of mind or body. Think that your strength *cannot* fail, because Christ your head cannot fail. His strength is yours, and is promised to you to supply all your need. Your union with him by faith makes all things sure to you. "Because he lives, you

shall live also." Speak thus to the suffering and sorrowing disciples of their absent but returning Lord, ye who know and live upon these soul-supporting truths. And let the desponding, doubting followers of the Lamb take courage. My dear brethren, I know not your particular circumstances and cases; but I do know that there is a remedy, an all-healing balm and medicine for each of you. I do know that it is *impossible* you can be out of the reach of this. "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from ALL sin." You know and feel that you cannot save yourselves—well then, Jesus "came to seek and to save that which was *lost*;" to save *you*. "Whosoever *will*, let him take the water of life freely." There is no condition, no exclusion—no further condemnation, for Christ has paid your debt. His is a *finished* work, and you are "COMPLETE IN HIM." Doubt no longer. Do not dishonor the riches of his grace, the fulness of his ready love, by unbelieving fears. If you love Jesus, or desire to love him, it is because he first loved you. "He will never leave you or forsake you." "All things are yours," death as well as life, things to come as well as things present, (1 Cor. iii. 21—23;) and if it be his will that you pass through the valley of the shadow of death, you shall "fear no evil," for he will walk with you through it, and you will rest with the happy spirits of the just till the glorious resurrection morning; and "when

Christ, who is your life, shall appear, then shall you also appear with him in glory;" so that whether you go to Christ, or he comes to you, you are equally blessed, and nothing shall ever separate you from his love. Rom. viii. 35—39.

My dear friends, who do not yet see the value of Christ, and the worth of your immortal souls, suffer the word of affectionate exhortation from one who anxiously seeks your welfare, and sincerely desires to serve you. You have been told of the second coming of Jesus Christ. O! remember, that all who have heard the Gospel, will be punished at his coming with everlasting destruction, unless they belong to his flock now. Now he waits to be gracious. He will save you now if you are willing to be saved. He offers you a free and full salvation, a free pardon for all your sins, "without money and without price;" and "him that cometh he will in no wise cast out." It is an everlasting salvation: whom he once loves, he loves unto the end. When such a salvation, such mercy, is offered to you, will you refuse it? Will you run upon your own destruction, and go on mad in your sins, with God's curse upon you, refusing Christ, rejecting the only way of salvation, till it is too late? Well, then, mercy cannot save you, cannot reach you; for "there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby they must be saved, but only

the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. It may very soon be too late to cry for mercy. O! look to yourselves. You cannot be going the wrong road and the right one at the same moment. You cannot be going to hell and heaven at the same time. You must be in the way to one or the other, now, at this moment; and will not you be at the pains to ask which way you are going? Suppose you were taking a journey. If there were two roads, and one of these roads would lead you to the place where you wanted to go, while the other road led to a different place, what should you do? Should not you ask which was your way? Now, my dear readers, in your journey through time to eternity, you meet with two roads—the broad and the narrow way, the way of everlasting life, and the way of everlasting death. Jesus Christ says, I am the way. John xiv. 6. If he is not the way by which you go to God—if he is not your only hope and trust, "the chief among ten thousand," to you, the "altogether lovely," your all in all—if instead of this you think little of Christ, if you are thinking of going to heaven by your own works, and doings, and deservings, then I must tell you that God says, you cannot reach heaven. Jesus is the way, and there is no other way. Now, we have supposed that you were on a journey, and that you were asking your way. If you chose to go the wrong way, you know you could not

reach the place you were going to. And if you choose to walk in the "broad road that leads to destruction," if you will persist in taking the way to hell, you are just as sure that you can never be in heaven, as if you were going to one town, and took the road to another. You might walk very fast, and you might go a great distance; but all this would only lead you farther out of your way, and you would have to turn back again at last. And so you may try hard all your lives to serve God and Mammon at the same time. You may strive ever so much to keep up "a form of godliness, while you are denying the power thereof;" and you may go a great way in this, and be more religious, as you think, than your neighbors; but if the world has your *hearts*, if your affections are set on things on the earth, it is plain your *treasure* is on earth; "for where your treasure is, there will your hearts be also." What a man *likes* best, what he loves most, he will think most about. Just think what *you* like best. You may know by this whether you are deceiving yourselves, whether you are in the broad or the narrow way, in the right road or the wrong. And you know that if you go on ever so long in the wrong road, you are only going farther out of your way, and you must turn back or be lost forever! O! fly to Christ, that your sins may be blotted out by his blood, and your hearts changed by his

Spirit to hate sin, and to love holiness; and you "shall never perish," but have everlasting life, and glory, and happiness in his kingdom. You have been told that the time may be very near when Christ will come again in person, to set up this glorious, happy kingdom, and what will be the consequences of that coming. If you never heard these things before, you *have* heard them now. Remember that you will have to account for the use you have made of what you have been told now. God grant that you may all "find mercy of the Lord in that day," that you may all be found among those wise virgins who had oil in their lamps—that is, the oil of the grace of God in their hearts—and who were ready for their Lord when he came. Read the twenty-fifth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel, and see what was the awful case of the foolish virgins; and, oh! take warning, watch and be ready, "for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh." But if you would desire to be found ready, do not forget that in your own strength you can do nothing. You must be united to Christ, the living vine, if you would bear fruit to his glory. See the fifteenth chapter of St. John's Gospel. Your own righteousness will not save you. Christ must save you. You are sinners, sinners without help and without hope in yourselves. But you do not know this, unless God, by his Spirit, has shown you your sin, because you are by nature

proud, and blind, and ignorant of God's holiness, and you know not what wickedness is in your hearts. A man must know that he is sick before he will go to a physician to cure him, and *you* must know that you are sinful and helpless before you will go to Christ, the good Physician, to cure you. My dear fellow-sinners, ask the God of love to show you the evil of your hearts, for Christ's sake; to teach you to prize, above all things, the good news, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, the chief of sinners, (1 Tim. i. 15,) and then you will learn to look forward with grateful joy, and with earnest desire, to his coming again "the second time, without sin, *unto salvation*;" for he will so come "to those that look for him." Heb. ix. 28. Believe in Him, then, and be saved. Faith is the gift of God, "but ask, and it shall be given unto you; seek, and ye shall find."

Many parents, perhaps, will read this Address. Think, my dear friends, what is best worth having for yourselves and for your children,—a little earthly gain and treasure, that you can keep but for a few days or a few years, or the true riches, the one thing needful, even everlasting, never-ending life and glory, through the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ. Surely you should chiefly desire that your children may be instructed in heavenly things. You should, above all things, desire and pray that God's blessing may rest upon them, and that they

may be made, through his grace, "wise unto salvation, through faith that is in Christ Jesus."

Do I speak to poor parents? Is the opportunity—are the means given you of having your children taught? Will you throw away this opportunity by making no use of it? Can you tell how long it may please God to grant you either this or any other blessing? Some—but it is hoped not many of you—seem to care very little whether your children grow up ignorant and wicked or not. What can be said to such persons? If they go on in this way, they are going on in the broad road that leads to destruction, and they are doing what they can to make their children take the same road too. What an awful thought! But some of you like very well that your children should be scholars, because you think they will make their way in the world better; but then, this is all you think about. Do not you know that both you and your children have souls that cannot die, and must be either happy or miserable forever? Now, if you think that this world is all that signifies, or if you think it is the great matter that concerns you; if you think that you would be happy if you could better yourselves, as you say, and get a little more money than you have now, or a little more than your neighbors; if you think that this striving for gain is the best thing you can do for your children and yourselves, I want to show you, by God's

help, before it is too late, that you are mistaken—dreadfully and dangerously mistaken—and if you do still set your hearts on this world instead of on the next, I must tell you that you will fare no better than the wicked persons just spoken of, for you are in the wrong road too. O, it is sad to see you toiling so hard only for “the meat that perisheth,” which in a short time, perhaps in a very short time, can do you no good, while you are neglecting to labor for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man, Jesus, the bread of life, will give unto you! John vi. 27—58. How do you know how long God intends you to live here? How do you know how soon Christ may come to judge you? Has not he said, “at such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.” “Take ye heed, watch and pray.”

Rich and poor—for you are all equally concerned—as you would desire to escape that dreadful sentence, “depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire”—as you would wish to escape eternal misery, and to enter into eternal life and happiness, pray, and teach your children to pray, that you and they may be alike taught of God, and born again of his Spirit, that you may all love that Saviour who loved you, and died for you, who rose again, and went to heaven to intercede for all his own, and who will come again to live and reign with all his children forever.

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NEW JERUSALEM.

Lo, what a glorious sight appears
To our believing eyes;
The earth and seas are passed away,
And the old rolling skies!

From the third heaven, where God resides,
That holy, happy place,
The New Jerusalem comes down,
Adorned with shining grace.

Attending angels shout for joy,
And the bright armies sing,—
“Mortals, behold the sacred seat
Of your descending King!

“The God of glory down to men
Removes his blest abode;
Men are the objects of his love,
And he their gracious God.

“His own soft hand shall wipe the tears
From every weeping eye;
“And pains, and groans, and griefs, and fears,
And death itself shall die.”

How bright the vision! O, how long
Shall this glad hour delay!
Fly swifter round, ye wheels of time,
And bring the welcome day.